Final Negotiating Text Completed

Talks Resuming on Copenhagen Summit

WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Copenhagen
Denmark
6-12 March 1995

Attacking Poverty

Building Solidarity

Creating Jobs

UNITED NATIONS

NEW YORK — After nearly a year of arduous inter-governmental talks, the stage is set for the last phase of preparations for the 1995 World Summit for Social Development.

A new document, titled "Draft Outcome" of the Summit, was completed in late November and provided to UN Member States and other participants in the Summit preparatory process.

The text (A/CONF.166/PC/L.22) was extensively revised from earlier drafts following informal consultations among Governments in October.

The Social Summit, aimed at launching what the draft document calls "a global drive for social progress and development", is to be held from 6 to 12 March in Copenhagen, Denmark. So far, 55 world leaders have informed the UN that they plan to attend.

Once the document is approved by the Summit Preparatory Committee in January, it will be submitted for the endorsement of world leaders when they gather in Denmark. Officials say it is possible that negotiations on any outstanding issues will continue in Copenhagen.

With the end of the Cold War, there is "an urgent need" to address the profound social problems that afflict every country, "especially poverty, unemployment and social exclusion", world leaders would declare.

These problems are undermining the prospects "for peace and security within and between our nations", the draft text says, and "it is our task to address both their underlying causes and their distressing consequences in order to reduce uncertainty and insecurity in the lives of people".

The document notes that "economic activities, through which individuals express their initiative and creativity and which enhance the wealth of communities, are the fundamental basis for social progress".

"But", the document warns, "social progress will not be realized simply through the free interplay of market forces". "Public policies", it says, "are necessary to maintain social stability and to create a national and international economic environment that promotes growth with equity, responsibility and involvement".

Creation of an enabling economic environment, the text says, will entail a variety of steps, including implementation of the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, and continuing efforts "to reduce and eliminate the debt burdens of developing countries"; reduce trade barriers, improve the openness of the international trading system, and promote access for all countries to markets, productive investments and technologies.

The text consists of a Draft Declaration, which explains why the Summit is vital, and a Draft Programme of Action, which sets out the steps necessary "to reduce and eliminate major sources of social distress", particularly poverty, unemployment and social exclusion.

A Single Document

The Declaration and Programme of Action, originally negotiated separately during the first two preparatory sessions, are presented as a single draft document.

The heart of the Draft Declaration consists of nine distinct "commitments" for steps needed to ensure social progress.

"We gather here to commit ourselves, our Governments, and our nations to enhancing social development throughout the world so that all people may have the rights, resources, and responsibilities to enable them to lead satisfying lives and to contribute to the well-being of their families, their communities, and humankind", the document says. "To support these efforts must be an overriding goal of the international community".

Under-Secretary-General Nitin Desai, head of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, said the new docu-

ment takes account of concerns expressed by Governments during the informal consultations in October. The meetings were aimed at building on progress made during the second session of the Preparatory Committee in August.

'Action-Oriented Tone'

The Under-Secretary-General described the new text as "considerably shorter" than previous drafts, with a "more action-oriented tone" and a new structure that he said "provides the basis for the incorporation of further ideas".

The nine commitments, the text says, grow out of "our common vision, which aims at social justice, harmony and equity within and amongst countries, in full respect for national sovereignty and policy objectives, development priorities and religious and cultural diversity".

World leaders would pledge to:

- "Create an enabling economic, political, and legal environment conducive to social development";
- "Commit ourselves to the goal of eradicating poverty in the world, through decisive national actions and international cooperation, as a moral, political and economic imperative of humankind";
- "Commit ourselves to enabling all people to attain secure and sustainable livelihoods through freely chosen productive employment and work, and to maintain the goal of full employment";
- "Commit ourselves to promoting social integration and the participation of all people by fostering societies that are stable, safe and just";
- "Commit ourselves to achieving full equity and equality between women and men, and to recognizing and enhancing the participation of women in social progress and development";
- "Commit ourselves to promoting the economic, social, and human resource development of Africa and the least developed countries";
- "Commit ourselves to ensuring that structural adjustment programmes include social development goals of eradicating poverty, generating productive employment and enhancing social integration";
- "Commit ourselves to increase significantly and utilize more efficiently the resources assigned to social development in order to achieve the goals of the Summit through national action and international cooperation";
- "Commit ourselves to a strengthened framework for international cooperation for social development, in a spirit of partnership, through the United Nations and other multilateral institutions".

A New Era of Cooperation

"Far too many people, particularly women, increasingly face vulnerability, isolation, marginalization, violence and insecurity about the future — their own and their children's — as poverty, unemployment and social disintegration seem to become pervasive and mutually reinforcing features of the contemporary world", the draft document declares.

"We wish to launch at this Summit a new era of international cooperation between Governments and between peoples, based on a spirit of partnership that puts the needs and aspirations of people at the centre of our decisions".

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